



## Support **#SB94** Toolkit

### *Time for Review: A new look at decades-old sentences*

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#### About SB 94 (Cortese):

**SB 94, Judicial Review of Old Sentences**, authored by Senator Cortese would create rigorous sentencing review for some individuals serving life without parole for offenses committed before June 6, 1990, and who have served at least 25 years of their sentence. Courts will review evidence of mitigating factors and rehabilitation, and judges will have the discretion to leave the sentence unchanged or to resentence the person with parole eligibility.

#### Resources:

- [Download graphics](#) for social media posting ([additional graphics here](#))
- Read the bill's fact sheet [here](#)
- Track SB 94 on Leg Info [here](#)
- Read Sarah Stillman's [New Yorker article](#)
- Watch video from the SB-94 Survivor Lobby Day
- Read and watch video from [Sacramento Bee](#)
- Read Michelle Scott's [Knock LA article](#)
- Read Judge Cordell's op-ed in [Mercury News](#)
- Read Dortell Williams' [LA Progressive article](#)



## Take Action:

- Submit a letter of support to the California legislature as an organization or individual:
  - [Click here for support letter template and instructions](#)
- [Contact your legislator directly](#) to express your support for Senate Bill 94
  - **Call your Assemblymember:**
    - Use the Capitol Office phone number listed on the legislator's website
  - **Email your Assemblymember:**
    - Select "Contact" on the legislator's website
    - Enter your personal information
    - Paste the following script into the "Comments" section 
  - **Sample email/call-in script:**
    - Subject (if available): I urge you to SUPPORT SB 94
    - Hello Assemblymember \_\_\_\_\_,  
My name is [Your Name] and I live in [City or County]. I am reaching out because I strongly support SB 94 (Cortese), Judicial Review of Old Sentences, and I hope you will too. SB 94 would restore judicial discretion in a relatively small number of old cases giving judges the ability to consider whether sentences imposed in the 1970s and 1980s are still in the interest of justice. This bill would impact people who have served at least 25 years on a life without parole sentence, giving the judge an opportunity to leave the sentence unchanged or resentence to a parole-eligible sentence. *[Include a brief explanation of how SB 94 will impact you or your loved ones, if applicable!]* SB 94 aims to reach an aging population locked into extreme sentences from decades ago that are inconsistent with our present-day sentencing practices. SB 94 has garnered broad support from faith groups, crime survivors, reform advocates, and civic leaders. Thank you for your time and consideration.

## Sample Social Media Posts:

Twitter:


## Share your support for #SB94

 Take action today! Join us in urging your legislators to support #SB94. We must allow judges to review old sentences that are keeping aging people in prison who, under today's guidelines, would not be sentenced to die in prison.  Get the toolkit here: [bit.ly/SB94Toolkit](http://bit.ly/SB94Toolkit)

SB94 by Senator Dave Cortese would allow judges to review life-without-parole (LWOP) sentences for people whose cases occurred prior to June 6, 1990. Yes on #SB94 by [@SenDaveCortese](https://twitter.com/SenDaveCortese)! Toolkit: [bit.ly/SB94Toolkit](http://bit.ly/SB94Toolkit)

Sentencing someone to die in prison is unheard of in much of the world, yet it's common practice in California. #SB94 by @SenDaveCortese is a common sense reform that would allow judges to review decades old LWOP sentences that were decided in the 1970s and 80s.

CA's rapidly aging prison population is a public health crisis. Between 2000 & 2017, the # of CA prisoners aged 50 or older more than quintupled, from 4% to 23% of the prison population. #SB94 would simply allow judges to review some of these very old cases.

#SB94 would allow judges to look at very old cases and apply present-day sentencing practices which take into account mitigating factors like intimate partner violence, intellectual disabilities, and childhood trauma. Toolkit to urge yes on #SB94 : [bit.ly/SB94Toolkit](https://bit.ly/SB94Toolkit)

"If 1, or 2, or 4 out of 500 incarcerated people can prove their rehabilitation after a quarter century in prison, they deserve to make their case. And then it's up to judges, parole boards and the governor, ultimately, to make a decision." Sen. Dave Cortese, author of #SB94 #CALeg [bit.ly/sacbee-sb94](https://bit.ly/sacbee-sb94)

### **#SB94 is a racial justice and gender justice issue**

I agree with @SenDaveCortese when he said: "We can adopt resolutions on racial justice, we can set up commissions & special oversight boards, but until we change the laws that are leading to mass incarceration of people of color, none of that is going to matter." Pass #SB94!

This is a racial justice issue. Life Without Parole sentences are handed out disproportionately to Black and Latinx youth. 80% of ppl sentenced to LWOP in CA are people of color. The most common age of ppl sentenced to LWOP = 19. Yes on #SB94 [bit.ly/SB94Toolkit](https://bit.ly/SB94Toolkit)

#SB94 is a common-sense reform that will allow judges to review extreme sentences that are proven to target Black, Brown, TGI, & DV survivor community members. Tell your legislators to vote YES! Toolkit here: [bit.ly/SB94Toolkit](https://bit.ly/SB94Toolkit)

### **#YesOnSB94 is a step towards rectifying impacts of extreme sentencing**

"For prosecutors, the felony-murder rule offers an efficient path to conviction: winning a case is much easier if you don't need to prove a person's mens rea—"guilty mind"—or even, in some cases, to establish that the accused was at the scene of the crime." @stillsarita @newyorker

"We shouldn't underestimate how many plea bargains occur in the shadow of felony-murder charges across the country. It is one of those quiet drivers of mass incarceration we never acknowledge." - Ekow Yankah, a law professor in the @newyorker by @stillsarita #YesOnSB94 #CALeg

Sadik Baxter sat in handcuffs in the back of a sheriff's vehicle. Miles away, his friend hit two bicyclists with a car. Sadik was sentenced to felony murder: [bit.ly/newfm](https://bit.ly/newfm)

In CA, 62.5% of people who would be affected by #SB94 are sentenced with a felony murder special circumstance.

62.5% of people who would be affected by #SB94 are sentenced with a felony murder special circumstance. Felony murder is one of the easiest murder convictions for a prosecutor to win. Voting #YesOnSB94 is a step towards rectifying harm of extreme sentencing practices. [bit.ly/newfm](http://bit.ly/newfm)

The majority of people serving LWOP are classified as low-risk. According to CDCR's own risk assessment tool – 88% of people serving life without parole have been assessed with the lowest risk score and tend to have few, if any, disciplinary write ups. #SB94 is safe, sane, and compassionate.

## Survivors who say #YesOnSB94

"I get to see remarkable human beings inside that have so much to offer society, and many of them were sentenced to die in prison. And it's heartbreaking." Gunner Johnson - Survivor of violent crime and supporter of #SB94 #CALeg [bit.ly/sacbee-sb94](http://bit.ly/sacbee-sb94)

Many crime survivors do not want perpetual punishment and retribution but healing and accountability. #SB94 is carefully designed to respect the rights of crime victims alongside the rights of individuals who received extreme sentences decades ago.

Despite popular assumptions that victims support long prison sentences, the National Survey of Victims' Views finds that victims would prefer the criminal justice system focus more on rehabilitation than punishment by a 2 to 1 margin. 61% of crime victims support shorter prison sentences. #SB94

"I had a victim-offender dialogue with the man who took [my father's] life and I learned a lot about him to better understand who he is as a human being. I'm here in support of change and I'm in support of #SB94." Check out more testimony from crime survivors:

In April survivors of violent crime traveled from across the state to tell #CALeg they support #SB94, which creates a careful review process for some people serving LWOP. Many survivors heal through accountability and witnessing transformation, not perpetual punishment.

## #SB94 Offers Hope

Yes on #SB94: "I felt purpose in prison and my thought back then was, 'if I die in prison, I want my son to remember me for doing something positive even though I was locked up,'" Bell shared. It is people like Bell that SB 94 is designed to benefit." [bit.ly/sb94spectrum](http://bit.ly/sb94spectrum) #CALeg

Yes on [#SB94](#): The law would not guarantee a person's release "but it would help people who have experienced rehabilitation while behind bars to have an opportunity to make a case for a second chance on the outside." [bit.ly/sb94spectrum](http://bit.ly/sb94spectrum)

"I exhibited decades of exemplary behavior, participating in self-motivated programs to understand the root cause of my behavior & be truly accountable for my actions. It changed me. I devoted myself to becoming a positive member of my community." - Chyrl Lamar, [@c\\_c\\_w\\_p](#) [#SB94](#)

"My sentence told me I had no hope or chance, yet I maintained hope. Society had written me off as the worst of the worst, yet I have proven that it is possible to reenter society and become a productive member dedicated to giving back." - Ms. Chyrl Lamar w/ [@c\\_c\\_w\\_p](#)

"After spending my entire adult life inside, I know there are so many elderly serving LWOP who are doing positive programming or are too sick to work. [#SB94](#) would be beneficial for public safety, public health, & our budget." - Ms. Chyrl Lamar w/ [@c\\_c\\_w\\_p](#)

"We all understand [#SB94](#) does not guarantee resentencing. Those of us who have made the change, even though at the time there was never the chance to be released, are ready to go before the parole board and be given the chance to prove ourselves through our rehabilitative measures." [#SB94](#)

"I wake up every day with hope that change will come. Being incarcerated for 37 yrs, I'm getting older by the day & tired. But if I can stop one person from going down the wrong path, that's why I continue to get up." [#SB94](#)